# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COUNCIL MINUTES October 4, 2013

The meeting convened at 7:30 a.m., at City Council Chambers, 37 Green Street, Concord, NH.

PRESENT: Tim Bernier, Christopher Carley, Byron Champlin, Councilor Mark Coen, Peter Cook, Stephen

Heavener, Brad Hosmer, Bill Norton, Councilor Allen Bennett, and Connie Rosemont

ABSENT: Walter Chapin, Councilor Jan McClure, Councilor Keith Nyhan, Larry Gloekler, John Hoyt, Councilor

Dan St. Hilaire, and Claudia Walker

STAFF: Carlos P. Baía, Deputy City Manager – Development

Matt Walsh, Director of Redevelopment, Downtown Services, and Special Projects

Donna Muir, Administrative Assistant

## 1. Minutes of the July 12, 2013, EDAC meeting

Mr. Carley asked that the minutes be reviewed for approval at this time. Mr. Bernier moved to approve the minutes as submitted and Mr. Norton seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

#### 2. United Way Asset Building Initiative

Mr. Carley introduced Cary Gladstone of the Granite United Way. Mr. Gladstone stated that the United Way's annual campaign is underway at this time. He explained his position with the United Way. He talked about the United Way's Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) Program and how the VITA program is a stepping stone for the United Way's new endeavor, the Asset Building Initiative, to provide year-round financial education for low and moderate income individuals. Some of the programs will include first-time homebuyer classes and credit repair and budgeting education. Another component of the initiative will be the training of volunteers to prepare taxes for those using the VITA Program. Mr. Gladstone is utilizing the annual campaign as a way to educate people at their places of work about services provided by the United Way's new initiative. He is also looking to recruit individuals to volunteer for the VITA program.

EDAC members discussed the following with Mr. Gladstone:

- other organizations/businesses where presentations could be made
- taking away customers from other businesses offering the same services
- the change in United Way's mission

The Chair thanked Mr. Gladstone for his presentation.

#### 3. Downtown Projects and Initiatives Update

Matt Walsh, the City's Director of Redevelopment, Downtown Services, and Special Projects, provided an overview of the City Council's reorganization of the City's parking responsibilities. He discussed the parking fund's near insolvency and how the City is looking to create a comprehensive strategic plan; the last one was completed more than 20 years ago. Mr. Walsh stated that he is proposing to hire a consultant to do the research and work with the City to create the new long-term plan.

EDAC members discussed the following points:

- The proposed role of the consultant
- How the new plan will drive the parking Capital Improvement Plan (CIP), which will include a maintenance plan and rate structure plan
- Possible reasons for the downturn in revenue for the parking fund
- How current long-term leases affect the revenue and possible options for the parking garages
- Incorporating critical stakeholders in the discussions
- Ability to look at parking as a whole

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The Chair introduced Brett St. Clair, from the public relations firm Louis Karno & Company, Inc. Mr. St. Clair explained that his firm was hired by the City to provide public relations for the Downtown Complete Streets project. He provided a construction update and proposed schedule for the project. Questions were raised regarding the receipt of only one bid, which was significantly over the engineer's estimate. Mr. Baía explained what has been ongoing with the bid process and the issues with the timing of the issuance of the Request for Proposals (RFP).

EDAC members had discussions regarding the following items with Mr. St. Clair:

- The requirement in the RFP for the use of Deer Isle, Maine granite
- If reducing the bid amount, the need to maintain the "wow" factor of the project
- Ways the PR firm will be marketing the project, including hosting special events, "boots-on-the ground" approach, involving downtown merchants, upstairs tenants, and patrons, use of a newsletter entitled "Daily Dig," training for frontline City staff to ensure one voice
- The timeliness of the PR firm in getting communications out to the stakeholders to get ahead of rumors

The Chair thanked Mr. St. Clair for his presentation.

### 4. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 9:02 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Donna Muir